1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3



one does so one will contract the disease. This curious belief is universal, and great precautions are taken when travelling to make sure that eggs are from a safe source. 782 753

It is a fact that the yolk of hens' eggs is the medium in which what is believed to be the germ causing leprosy has recently been successfully cultivated in European laboratories. This discovery, which is as yet not fully confirmed, is of course quite unknown to the Min Chia, and if it proves correct will be a striking instance of popular superstition coinciding with scientific fact. The Min Chia also believe that leprosy is transmitted by flies which have alighted on a leper's sore, and later touch the skin of another person; a belief which may be due to hearsay knowledge of the germ theory. Goitre, which is very common in Yunnan due to the lack of iodine in the water, is believed, curiously enough, to be caused by mental anxiety and worry, perhaps because it mainly attacks the under-nourished poor, who may be expected to be more afflicted with worries than their wealthy neighbours. Snakebite, which is much feared, especially in the rice planting season when the workers must wade in the flooded fields, is believed to be mortal in all cases unless the wound can be quickly and tightly bound with a maiden's hair, a specific usually easily available, as the girls are at work in the field also. These cases where disease is believed to be due to contagion or infection are rare; for the most part illness is attributed to malign or angry ghosts, and the remedy is sacrifice at one of the shrines mentioned above, or the re-orientation of the ancestral tombs if it is believed that the angry ghost of an ancestor is responsible.

The Min Chia do not practise Black Magic and are unaware of its existence. A description of rites such as the making of wax figures and their subsequent destruction to compass the death of an enemy excites surprise, and the inquiry whether foreigners do that sort of thing. On the [789] 787

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3
Ch'iang



to a crossroads and the jar is buried upside down. The jar is covered by paper, and priests have told the writer that the paper moves because the demon is jumping about inside. During cremation, in some villages, two wooden birds are placed on the coffin. They are rescued and carried away to the homes of the rescuers.

When a person dies there is present a poisonous breath called *sa ch'i* 煞氣. To offset its effects and to keep away demons a cockerel is sometimes killed and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts.

## V. *Religion.*

### 1. The Future Life.

The Ch'iang have not a very definite idea of the future life. Some say that hades is below and that it is a dark and shadowy place. They have heard the Christian teaching about heaven and hell, and that of the Buddhists and Taoists about hell and Western Paradice. Their idea of the soul does not seem to be very clear. There are few if any memorial customs excepting those that were influenced by the Chinese. They say that they love and revere their ancestors, living and dead. Said one, "If we offer food or burn spirit money, what good does it do? If we offer food or wine, they cannot eat or drink it. Spirit money when burnt turns into smoke." Some believe in reincarnation. Many commemorate their ancestors on the fifth day of the fifth moon or the fifteenth day of the seventh moon. Some worship their ancestors in their homes on the first, fifteenth, and thirtieth of each lunar month.

### 2. The World View.

These people live on the sides and tops of high mountains, or in narrow valleys. The climate is cool and comparatively dry. Near them live the powerful Jia Rung, the Wa Ssu, the Hsi Fan, and the fierce Heh Shui, Luh Hua, and Bolotzu. Wild animals live in the forests and attack human beings, the crops, and the domestic animals. There are floods and droughts. People fall over the cliffs or drown in the streams. Lightning strikes trees and houses, and sometimes kills people or animals. Earthquakes shake down houses, rolling stones kill or injure people, and pestilences sweep the country killing men and domestic animals. The Ch'iang are not

5: Graham E-5 (1933, 1941) 1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3
Ch'iang



[178] educated or scientifically trained, and they assume that they see in these events the working of mysterious forces that may do good or harm. The priests, the gods, the ceremonies and the sacred implements are surcharged with mysterious power with which he seeks to control events, warding off calamities and enabling him to enjoy a successful and satisfying life, in which the basal needs of food, sex, clothing to protect from the cold, shelter from the forces of nature and protection from enemies, numerous descendants etc. are satisfied, and one can enjoy a successful and happy life.

3. The Gods.

[176] The Ch'iang are not monotheists, and there is no certain evidence that they ever have been. The priest at Mu Shang Chai, who is a relative of the deceased Christian pastor Kou P'in-shan, stated that in his ceremonies he worshipped besides the greatest god twelve other gods. At Lung Ch'i Chai we saw two different shrines on housetops where the large white stone was surrounded by twelve smaller stones. In the sacred grove at Lung Ch'i Chai there are four different shrines to four different gods. By persistent enquiry we learned that in some of the villages the Ch'iang have five major gods and twelve minor gods, not counting a goodly number of Chinese gods that are found in Ch'iang homes, in wayside shrines, and in Chinese temples. In addition to making enquiries in several different localities, we have translated, as well as possible considering our very limited knowledge of the language, enough of the chants of two different priests to assure ourselves that they worship a number of gods. In one of the chants the different gods are named in order as we will give them below, and called upon to come and assist the priest. While we must make allowance for variations in different localities, we can be sure that they are not monotheists and worship more than one deity.

[177] The supreme god is called Mu Byei Sei (mv bjei sei), Mu Bya Sei, M Ta Bei, M Bya, Sei, Ma Byei Ch'i, and at least at Jung Mien Wai, Lung Ch'i Chai and Mu Shang Chai where Christian influence has been strong he is often called Abba Ch'i or Abba Sei. Abba means father and it may be applied to any god. On the other hand a number of Ch'iang have asserted that Abba Ch'i or Abba Sei is properly used only to designate Chinese gods in Chinese temples. The first two syllables, Ma bei, mu bya, or m bya, mean sky and sei

Mewu

held, I gathered from the Mewu-Fantzu that the magic power of a böm-bu is considered greater than that of the lama, although he does not enjoy special social privileges. In cases of illness, the nomads as a rule first consult a lama who can determine which spirit has caused the illness. They are sometimes in doubt whether in a certain case exorcism by a böm-bu or a lama would be more successful. The result is that, oddly enough, a lama is first consulted, and they let him decide, by throwing dice, which exorcism would be more effective, that of the lama or the böm-bu. This is a noteworthy indication of the tolerance Lamaism has for popular religion, and it also shows that the lamas for their part do not doubt the magic power of the böm-bu. Thus I was told that in cases of serious illness, the böm-bu is generally preferred because the people believe he has greater magic power, and that he is nevertheless no more expensive than a lama.

/51/ The most common task of the böm-bu is to heal sickness with magic. The cause of the illness is assumed to be an offense against the spirits or possession by an evil spirit, and above all, enchantment by an enemy. However, sickness is not regarded as a punishment for sins. In our discussion of earth spirits, we pointed out that the Mewu-Fantzu believe that sudden illness can arise if one scratches up the ground and thus offends the earth spirits. In this case barley roasted in a kettle is sacrificed. Half of it is roasted until it is black, the other half is less thoroughly done. Both halves are then mixed and strewn on the ground. At the same time cypress wood is burned, and sacred writings are read aloud. The reading aloud of sacred writings is an essential part of the ritual of exorcism, just as it is among Chinese exorcists. The böm-bu can read the sacred writings in the tent of the sick person, but he also reads them in his own tent, on the one hand, in order to learn them, and on the other, to bring good luck to other people who have delegated him to do the reading. For a three-day treatment of an illness the böm-bu is given a sheep or $3 - $4. For reading sacred writings in his own tent throughout a forenoon, he gets about 20 cents. A lama receives the same amount for treating sickness with prayer.

As an exorcist, the böm-bu's duty is to drive out evil spirits and if possible destroy them. He can catch the evil spirits. To do this he reads the sacred writings aloud and uses a whip made of yak leather. A man stands in front of the böm-bu and holds open a bag of yak leather into which the böm-bu charms the evil spirit. A great many people stand behind the bag, threatening the evil spirit

Mewu

791 with all kinds of weapons - muskets, bows and arrows, swords and
755 knives - and driving the spirit into the bag. When the spirit is
789 captured, the bag is carried outside, opened up over a fire of /52/
yak dung and symbolically emptied. The escaping evil spirit is threatened with the weapons carried by the men who accompany the bag, and this is supposed to drive the spirit into the fire where he is consumed. This burning of the spirit always takes place at a crossroad, which is why crossroads are avoided in the evening, since one never knows whether or not the burning has been successful. This type of exorcism is practiced only in cases of illness.

791 In special cases exorcistic rites are carried on simultaneously
789 by a considerable number of böm-bu. Thus before a war 10 to 20 böm-bu gather in order to curse the enemy and ask for good luck. In this case the böm-bu invoke a special god, the horse god (Ma-wang-yeh). They can also, like the lamas, invoke the mountain spirits which bring luck.

791 The böm-bu surpass the lamas in their exclusive ability to
754 practice black magic. However, they must be paid more for this than for ordinary exorcism. A böm-bu can be induced to bring sickness or a cattle epidemic down upon an enemy, but for this he must be paid with a yak or a horse, whether or not he is successful.

When black magic is practiced with the help of a böm-bu, a dog is killed and its blood used. The name of the person to be bewitched is written on a slip of paper, along with a magic formula. Then the paper is dipped in the blood of the dog and buried near the person who is being bewitched. (1) Meanwhile /53/ the böm-

1. In China we also find that cursed objects intended to bring ill luck through black magic are buried. For example, if a woman does not wish her neighbor well, she tries to gain possession of a few of her neighbor's hairs which she brings to an old woman versed in black magic and making a business of it. With the help of incantations, the old woman can make the hairs work an evil spell, for example, produce trachoma or boils. However, in order to be effective, the hairs must be secretly placed under the chamber pot (ma-t'ung) of the victim.

bu is reading aloud from the sacred books in his tent. It is not possible, however, by means of magic to turn men into animals

and vice versa, as I was told several times in China.